



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
**730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476**  
**Phone: 781-316-3000**

**webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us**

## **School Committee Minutes 06-10-2003**

**The Arlington School Committee**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, June 10, 2003**  
**7:30 PM**

**Present:** Suzanne Owayda, Chair  
Paul Schlichtman, Vice Chair  
Joani LaMachia, Secretary  
Barbara Goodman  
Sue Sheffler  
Jeff Thielman  
Martin Thrope

Chief Financial Officer: David Kale  
Special Education Director: Marilyn Bisbicos  
Budget Analyst: Janet Collins

**Absent:** Kathleen Donovan  
Joanne Gurry

Call To Order: 7:35 PM

### **TEACHER RECOGNITION**

**Ms. Owayda recognized and presented awards to the following teachers for their outstanding performance:**

Cheryl Hemenway, AHS music teacher recognized as a finalist in the 2004 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year.

Jack Duranceau, AHS science teacher recognized for his AP physics class placement in the national and regional physics competitions

Lucile Burt, AHS English teacher recognized for receiving The Golden Foundation for Excellence in Education award.

Sheldon Obelsky, AHS Social Studies recognized for receiving The Golden Foundation for Excellence in Education award. (unable to attend)

Don Bockler, AHS science teacher selected by the Massachusetts Association of Science Supervisors to be inducted into the Science Educators Hall of Fame. (unable to attend)

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Amanda Formica AHS spoke of the impact the budget cuts would have on AHS programs.

Alex Candelas commended APS for the superior job they do educating the children of Arlington.

### **DIVERSITY TASK FORCE REPORT**

Miriam Stein, Co-chair of the Arlington Vision 2020 Task Force and a member of the Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Committee addressed the Committee relative to minority hiring. Ms. Stein voiced concern that the loss of the Human Resources position would impact Arlington's ability to attract and compete with top teachers. The Diversity Task Force recommends that APS

Maintain and update the database of applicants

Outreach and build relationships with college recruiters  
Follow up with strong candidates  
Possibly create a part-time human resource position

Committee members agreed with some of the recommendations of the task force and referred the follow up on the core function of the human resource position to the Specialized Student Services subcommittee

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Ms. Owayda thanked AEA president Virginia Fuller for the support of the AEA in the override campaign especially the letter writing to members of the MTA who live in Arlington and the intensive signature campaign petitioning the legislature to adequately fund education.

### **WARRANT APPROVAL**

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously Voted to approve warrant # 03162 in the amount of \$561,836.35.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

#### **Vote/Summer Authorization for Expenditure of Funds**

In response to Mr. Schlichtman's inquiry as to what needed to be done to close out the budget and what assistance would be needed from the budget subcommittee, Mr. Kale responded that the first item would be to request the annual budget transfer authority from the School Committee. Mr. Kale explained that authorization would help to close the books as well as to be ready for the audit; this is a request that the Superintendent has made in the past and received.

Mr. Schlichtman believed that the committee needed to have documentation since it is the committees' responsibility to oversee the budget. Mr. Kale pointed out that in terms of trying to clear up the fiscal year and to be sure that we meet our commitments that the Superintendent would submit a final financial report to the school committee once the books are closed.

Mr. Schlichtman continued by stating that we set forth a guideline in the budget process that states that there are certain levels of transfers that require only a formal notification from the administration to the school committee upon the completion of these transfers; however transfers crossing program codes require School Committee authorization. Additionally, Mr. Schlichtman stated that he believed that it is illegal under MGL to delegate the transfer of authority of the budget and that he would not support any motion to delegate the responsibility we have under the law.

The major line item transfers will have to come before the committee at the next meeting, other level transfers can be done with just a report back to us without our approval but the committee must approve anything that is crossing line items.

Mr. Kale was of the opinion that it is legal to grant the Superintendent approval and that the transfer request would help to accomplish the processing of a number of payrolls and salaries over the summer to be sure monies are charged and obligated in the right places.

Ms. Owayda recommended voting the authorization and to then receive a report back from Supt. Donovan at the next meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously Voted moved to refer the issue to the budget subcommittee to clarify what the law is, what the School Committee responsibility is and what a line item transfer covers.

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was Voted summer authorization for expenditure of funds to Superintendent Donovan 6-1 Mr. Thrope voted no

Ms. Owayda reminded members to submit their vacation schedule for availability to sign the

warrant.

### **Town Meeting Update**

Ms. Owayda stated that the school budget \$29.9 million plus \$560,000 was approved at Town Meeting on Monday evening. With a successful override we will go into town meeting on Monday June 16<sup>th</sup> to receive the supplemental budget.

In response to Ms. Goodman's request on the number of pink slips given out Ms. Bisbicos stated that only Non-professional staff received notices today by agreement with the union, and professional staff notices will go out next week if necessary.

### **School Calendar**

Mr. Thrope made note that the May 25<sup>th</sup> school committee meeting falls on a Jewish holiday

Mr. Schlichtman suggested that with the start of school beginning early and even with the possible 5 snow days, school would be out on June 24<sup>th</sup>. Since Yom Kippur falls on a school day he hoped the committee would consider closing school on October 6<sup>th</sup> and to extending the school year by one day in June.

Ms. Owayda suggested referring the issue to the policy and procedures for discussion, and to review the policy on religious observances. Mr. Schlichtman hoped that the Committee would not vote the calendar at this time but to discuss it at the subcommittee first and then come back to the full committee for a vote. Ms. Goodman stated that religious holidays should be recognized but does not believe that we should add more religious holidays to the calendar but rather we should have fewer religious holidays and let individuals celebrate their own beliefs.

Both Mr. Thielman and Ms. Sheffler voiced concern and were not in favor of delaying taking a vote on the calendar without knowing the implications of doing so.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman, seconded by Ms. LaMachia and amended by Mr. Thrope it was Voted to approve the 2003-2004 school calendar with the understanding the policy and procedures subcommittee revisit the two days in question October 6<sup>th</sup> and the day after the listed 180<sup>th</sup> day in June along with policy on religious observances. 6-1 Mr. Schlichtman-no.

### **Student Schedules AHS**

Ms. Owayda stated that at the School Committee meeting of April 29<sup>th</sup> the committee voted to eliminate prerequisites, a vote we took under a deadline. Since the vote of the committee to eliminate prerequisites from the high school program of studies took place there have been numerous concerns from staff on the ramifications of that decision. The School Committee will meet on June 24<sup>th</sup> with department heads, teacher representatives, the two assistant principals at the Ottoson Middle School and AHS principal, and asst. principal to discuss the details and issues surrounding the change. Ms. LaMachia also pointed out that by that time students will be registered for their classes which will enable us to see what students have signed up for, look at what some of the issues were with the process and identify next steps.

### **TECHNOLOGY BENCHMARK STANDARD K-5**

Steve Mazzola, Director of Technology presented the APS Technology Benchmark Standard K-5 to the School Committee for approval. Mr. Mazzola explained that when students were entering middle school it was evident that there was disparity among the schools the students came from.

Steve believed this was largely due to the technology advantages at the newer/renovated schools. After consulting with teachers, parents, principals and the technology council the standards were developed to ensure a common understanding and knowledge of technology. In addition, the guide also aligns with the district goals and the NCLB requirements. The technology council and the administrative cabinet have approved the document. Mr. Mazzola explained that the next step is to create similar documents for the OMS and AHS.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was unanimously Voted to approve the APS Technology Benchmark Standard K-5.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Community Relations Subcommittee:** Chair of that subcommittee Joani LaMachia wants to meet to follow up on the needs of the Dallin School since the vote taken to postpone the rebuilding of that school.

**Live School Committee Meetings-** Mr. Thrope noted that at our April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting at town hall the meeting was broadcast live and would like to investigate the possibility of doing that at the high school. Mr. Schlichtman stated that that request has been made to Comcast and is in the works. The cable technologist at the meeting was consulted and he stated that Comcast will be working on it over the summer and hopes to broadcast live in September.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously voted to request the cable company to broadcast the school committee meetings live when it becomes technically possible to do so.

**Guidance Task Force -** Ms. Bisbicos noted that the Guidance Task Force will meet on June 18<sup>th</sup> the time has yet to be determined. In response to Mr. Thrope's inquired as to the status of the interim director of guidance Ms. Bisbicos was unaware of what the recommendation is.

**Supt. Evaluation –** Ms. Owayda will report out on that in September.

**Status of Chief Financial Officer –** Mr. Kale stated that the Superintendent has completed round one of interviews and expects that after next week round two will begin.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to adjourn at 9:30 pm

Submitted by  
Karen Tassone  
Committee Secretary